

IRS TAX TIP 2004-03

WHO MUST FILE A TAX RETURN

There are some instances when you may not be required to file a federal income tax return. But keep this in mind — more than 70 percent of those who file are due a refund, so it may be to your advantage to file even if you are not required to.

The law does require you to file a tax return if your income is above a certain level. Check the instructions for Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ (under "filing requirements") for specific details that may affect your need to file a tax return with IRS this year.

Here are some general guidelines for anyone under age 65. Remember, these guidelines may change based on your particular situation. In general, once you have the following gross income amounts, the law requires you to file a federal tax return with the IRS:

Single	\$ 7,800
Head of Household	\$10,050
Married Filing Jointly	\$15,600
Married Filing Separately	\$ 3,050

Generally, a person who is self-employed must file a tax return if his or her net earnings from self-employment for the year exceed \$400.

Even individuals who don't earn enough to be required to file a tax return may be eligible for an earned income credit up to \$2,547 for a taxpayer with one qualifying child and \$4,204 for a taxpayer with two or more qualifying children. Some individuals who do not have a qualifying child may be eligible for a credit of up to \$382. However, you must file a return to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit. You must also file a return if you received any advance payments of this credit while you worked during the year.

For more information, visit the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov.

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